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UM bureau plans series on taxes, economic outlooks

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The University of
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NEWS RELEASE

Jan. 4, 2005

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UM BUREAU PLANS SERIES ON TAXES, ECONOMIC OUTLOOKS

MISSOULA —

Two decades ago, Montana's taxes ranked fifth highest in the nation. Today, our taxes are 39th highest, declining from 12 percent of taxpayers' income to 10 percent, according to one of the state's leading tax experts.

Douglas Young, a Montana State University professor who specializes in tax issues and policy, reports that some other changes over the past 20 years include less emphasis on natural resource taxes and more on property taxes, tax cuts on business equipment, and increases on cigarette and motel excise taxes.

Young will discuss Montana's tax situation at The University of Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research's 30th Annual Economic Outlook Seminar, which will be held in nine cities beginning the last week of January. This year's theme is "High Taxes, Low Taxes: What's Next for Montana?" The seminar series is cosponsored by BBER and First Interstate Bank.

"Despite many changes, Montana remains one of the five states without a general sales tax and has not enacted fundamental tax reform," Young said, adding that he plans to discuss options for reform.

As in past years, BBER Director Paul Polzin will highlight the latest economic trends

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and explain what they mean for Montanans. He also will present an economic forecast for each seminar city. Experts from BBER, MSU and UM's Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research will look at the state's forest products industry, manufacturing, agriculture, health care, and travel and tourism.

The seminar series will begin in **Helena** on Thursday, Jan. 25, at the Great Northern Hotel. Following is the schedule for the other cities:

- **Great Falls** -- Jan. 26, Holiday Inn.
- **Missoula** -- Jan. 28, Holiday Inn Parkside.
- **Billings** -- Feb. 1, Northern Hotel.
- **Bozeman** -- Feb. 2, Holiday Inn.
- **Butte** -- Feb. 3, Ramada Inn Copper King.
- **Kalispell** -- Feb. 8, Kalispell Center Hotel.
- **Sidney** -- March 8, Sidney Elks Club.
- **Miles City** -- March 9, Town and Country Club.

Registration is \$70 and includes the seminar, proceedings booklet, lunch and a one-year subscription to the Montana Business Quarterly. Continuing education credits are available for an additional \$20. For more information call (406) 243-5113. Register online at BBER's Web site, <http://www.bber.umt.edu>.

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